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ABSTRACT

Developed as an assessment instrument for the Administrators-for-Change Training program, this survey of 195 administrative personnel in the Fort Worth Independent School District (Texas) identifies their priorities for training in management skills and the intensity of training desired. A synthesis of literature addressing the changing role of the principal reveals that, while on the job training is a major source of influence on task performance, the precise knowledge and skills necessary for administrative growth are often not addressed in inservice programs. The survey uses a six-point Likert scale reflecting a skill/training continuum from one (desire no training) to six (desire assistance with school implementation). The instrument explores training needs in seven areas; the principalship; the school as an ecosystem; creative problem-solving; planning-for-planning; staff development; long-range planning; and personal awareness. Results reflect varying priorities among the groups surveyed--elementary and secondary principals, secondary vice-principals, central-office supervisory personnel, and miscellaneous personnel--though all groups desired training at least at an awareness level in all skill areas. It is concluded that large-scale training should be provided in those areas most groups requested and subsequent training provided for more specialized concerns. Data and the survey instrument are appended. (MJL)

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LEADERSHIP TRAINING NEEDS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL IN A MAJOR METROPOLITAN DISTRICT IN TEXAS

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EA 015 827

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LEADERSHIP TRAINING NEEDS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL IN A MAJOR METROPOLITAN DISTRICT IN TEXAS

Changing Role of the Principalship

The decade of the 1960s precipitated a great deal of concern about the plight of American education. Out of this concern began to evolve response mechanisms diverse in content yet unified in the conviction that educational institutions could be made better. In the late 1960s a new wave of optimism spread as new and revised programs and materials were produced.

Responses to the educational problems took various forms. The emphasis for most, however, was placed on identifying students' needs and creating various mechanisms through which those needs could be met. Though a wave of optimism was generated by these innovations, by the 1970s the view was that most of the aforementioned reform had failed.

At the beginning of the decade, the role of the principalship was beginning to be examined. There was a prevailing sense that within the principalship lay the key to apparent reform failure. To provide the reader with an historical perspective on the changing role of the principalship, a brief synthesis of the literature of the changing role of the principalship follows.

Heathers (1972) concluded that the perceived failure of educational innovations to achieve their goals was generally due to the inadequate patterns of implementation in the academic institutions themselves. Anderson (1973) suggested too little

effort went into preparing personnel to utilize the proposed materials and strategies. In other words, the educational leaders themselves were of critical importance if programs were to succeed. Fantini (1976) echoed a similar conclusion. Goodlad (1975) added that an academic institution must assert its own individuality, utilizing its formal and informal structures, its own personel, and its own particular needs and mechanisms for accomplishing its tasks.

If indeed the midmanager (principal) was a major key to the success of his/her school operation, what was lacking in his/her role definition? Goldhammer's study (1971) addressed this question specifically by examining the role of elementary school managers. Goldhammer found virtually no criteria existed for the principal's role. The principal was often isolated or excluded from administrative decision making affecting his/her own campus. Even more alarming was Goldhammer's finding that even if principals were integrated into the decision-making structure, they generally lacked the educational expertise and management skills necessary for organizational growth. Goldhammer called for a role definition of the principalship. In addition, other scholars were addressing the problem of the principal's role.

Houts (1975) and McNally (1975) reviewed the problems of midmanagement at the elementary school level. They discussed recommendations that the principal become the educational leader of his/her school, offering the direction for change and growth at his/her campus. The further suggested that

principals acquire the management skills necessary in the planning and implementation of academic goals. In addition, scholars in administration (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1974; Kimbrough & Nunnery, 1976) were proposing the use of systems theory as a management and organizational tool. Snyder (1977) came to believe that systems theory offered much greater promise for promoting change than did Taylor's scientific management model. This notion does appear valid, especially when one considers that the principal is responsible for initiating and managing campus activities as well as coordinating the operations of the structural, technical, and psychosocial subsystems within the school.

The origins of the changing role of the principal in the public schools have been noted along with the assertion that midmanagement needs to assume a major responsibility for managing the change process. This interpretation of the role of school-based administrators then necessitates that additional knowledge and competencies be learned somehow and assimilated into the existing educational system.

In the Goldhammer study (1971), elementary principals reported that their initial educational-training programs were limited in content and methodology. Consequently, their initial training had limited influence on their role performance. Goldhammer (1971, chap. 7) concluded from his study that on-the-job learning appeared to be a major source of influence on task performance. Nevertheless, the knowledge and skills necessary for proper educational functioning and administrative growth are often lacking in inservice training. He identified six critical

omission areas where initial training was lacking as contrasted to the administrators' actual needs. These are as follows: (1) knowledge relating to goal setting, long-range planning, and evaluation procedures; (2) strategies for improvement and for assessing alternatives; (3) group processes and communication skills; (4) educational leadership; (5) educational improvement through resource allocation; and (6) human relations training.

Writing for the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc., an affiliate of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, LaPlant (1979) has noted there is a growing awareness that new technologies, validated programs, or more money do not in themselves cause educational improvement. The best educational ideas, if placed in the hands of unmotivated or ill-trained personnel are unlikely to fulfill their purpose. LaPlant argued that if change were the educational concern, and all program improvement implies change, one could build a case for making the principal's role the focus of inservice efforts.

Instrument Design

In the mid-seventies, Snyder developed the Administrators-for-Change Training (ACT) program. It was designed to address the various contemporary leadership training needs of the principalship. The need for a program assessment instrument was soon apparent. An instrument with a six-point Likert scale was developed for identifying administrative training needs. The six-point scale went from One (Desire No Training) to Six (Desire Assistance with School Implementation). Specifically the following definitions were used to guide the participants' responses:

(1) no training (skill unrelated); (2) no training (competency high); (3) training (awareness level); (4) training (initial practice); (5) training (skill refinement); and (6) assistance with school implementation. The six points on the scale reflected a skill/training continuum. To establish scale reliability and validity, school administrators across the nation responded to the instrument.

Specifically the instrument surveyed administrative training needs in the following seven areas: (1) the principalship; (2) the school as an ecosystem; (3) creative problem solving; (4) planning-for-planning; (5) staff development; (6) long-range planning; and (7) personal awareness. The subscales and a brief content description of each follows: First was the principalship consisting of questions embracing the perspectives of leadership, planning, organizing, motivating organizational behavior, and controlling. Next was the topic of the school as an ecosystem. Questions addressed the environmental suprasystem as well as the goal, psychosocial, structural, technical, and management subsystems.

The third subscale was creative problem solving focusing on real school organizational problems from the perspective of roles, communication skills, and problem solving steps. Next was planning-for-planning, which focused on the principal's varied tasks such as action planning and force field analysis.

The fifth subscale addressed was staff development encompassing clinical supervision, inservice training, and evaluation. The sixth subscale was long-range planning for school improvement which included goal setting, resource assessment, program

planning, implementation and monitoring functions, and evaluation procedures. Finally, there was a personal awareness subscale embracing the perspectives of personality characteristics, self-concept, and administrative-style effectiveness.

Survey Results

In January of 1980, the administrative personnel in the Fort Worth Independent School District were contacted. A total of 195 administrators (about 70% of the district's administrative personnel) completed the survey instrument. Following is a demographic picture of the participants: (1) 59 elementary principals; (2) 24 secondary principals; (3) 45 secondary vice-principals; (4) 61 central administration supervisory personnel; and (5) 6 with no category designation.

Table 1

Table 1 gives a ranking of need indices by training area for the groups surveyed. Not only do the data indicate training priorities, but the need indices indicate the intensity of training desired.

The group composite showed a need for all groups to be trained at an awareness level in all areas noted. As this was broken down in terms of priority concerns, the group as a whole wanted training in the following areas: (1) teacher performance

planning and evaluation; (2) clinical supervision and observational technology; (3) creative problem solving and communications; (4) planning as it linked school goals with school activities, teacher performance and evaluation, and with the management of goal attainment processes; and (5) personal awareness as it related personal style to effective leadership performance.

The elementary principals ranked the principalship and creative problem solving as priority areas. Specifically they indicated a need for training in the following areas: (1) teacher performance planning and evaluation linked to clinical supervision and observation technology; (2) instructional leadership as it related to school goals, to planning, to monitoring and evaluation practices, and to a linkage between school goals and teacher evaluation supervision and to the effective use of time; and (3) inservice as it related to assessing staff needs and to planning cognitive, affective and behavioral program components.

The secondary principals indicated a desire for training that involved practice in planning processes. Specifically, they indicated a need for the following kinds of training: (1) teacher performance planning and evaluation as it related to school goals, performance standards and to inservice programs; (2) planning activities as they related to a personal assessment of what was needed with identified means of attaining goals. Also included were concerns for involving staff, students and parents in goal setting and planning, setting planning time lines, budgeting time, balancing external and internal forces and knowing when to intervene into planned activities; and

(3) self awareness processes as they related to identifying personality style, self concept, leadership skills and beliefs as they impacted on their administrative performance.

The secondary vice-principals expressed a strong need for practice in training in all areas listed. Analysis of their responses showed interest in training in the following specific areas: (1) teacher performance planning and evaluation as it related to strategies for improvement, supervisory conferences, observation and data collection skills, inservice programs that meet individual and group needs; (2) creative problem solving skills as they related to communication skills to developing an environment to foster creativity, developing creative solutions to problems and to critiquing solutions; and (3) management skills as they related to assessing school needs, developing strategies to meet needs, monitoring goal attainment activities, and self awareness of personality, self concept, leadership and beliefs as they impacted on effective leadership.

The supervisory/central office staff showed a need for training at a practice level in the personal awareness dimensions and in activities of the principal, with awareness level training in all other areas. Analysis of their concerns indicated a desire for training in the following more specific areas: (1) personal awareness as it related to an analysis of personality style, self concept strength, leadership style and personal beliefs; (2) teacher performance planning and evaluation as it linked with supervisory conferences, observation and data collection and performance standards; and (3) creative problem solving as it related to communications, generating creative solutions

and critiquing such and to dealing with forces impacting growth.

Table 2

Table 2 provides the Spearman Rank-Order Correlations (rhos) for the groups surveyed. These correlations show the actual extent of agreement among the groups regarding training priorities for the leadership areas surveyed.

Considering all possible group combinations, the elementary principals and secondary vice-principals were most in agreement about training priorities ($\rho = .85$). The secondary principals and central-office personnel, however, were most in disagreement ($\rho = -.32$). These findings indicate that the administrative groups, with the exception of the elementary principals and the secondary vice-principals, are in disagreement about training priorities.

Next, Spearman rhos were computed for the ranking of training priorities between each group's ranking and the ranking for all groups combined. Table 2 shows that the elementary principals were largely in agreement with the composite groups training priorities ($\rho = .82$). In all other group combinations, there was disagreement regarding training priorities.

Conclusion

The data indicated that there are several messages coming out of this study. First, a large number of administrators in the Fort Worth Independent School District completed the instrument. Though the district was not selected using a defined probability approach, there is certainly no evidence that the administrators' training needs in the surveyed district are characteristically different from similar administrative personnel in the Southwest. In this sense, the findings appear at least generalizable to the larger districts in Texas.

From an assessment perspective, the data suggested that the administrative/supervisory staff had a number of similar concerns as groups as well as group-specific needs. The secondary administrative groups, for example, clearly had different role definitions and their concerns reflected that. From a training perspective, it appears logical to provide large scale training in those areas which most groups requested and subsequent training for those more specialized concerns.

In this study, the message was clear that school administrative personnel were expressing a desire for leadership training. If educational change is to be a continuing reality, with the best educational ideas being implemented in our schools, then there appears to be a clear mandate for leadership training. (As a postscript, the Sid Richardson Foundation has recently given a principals' leadership-training grant to the Fort Worth system School personnel are moving in the direction of leadership training).

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Table 1

Ranking of Need Indices By Leadership Area
for the Groups Surveyed

	Composite (n=195)	Elementary Principals (n=59)	Secondary Principals (n=24)	Secondary Vice-Principals (n=45)	Central Office Personnel (n=61)
The Principalship	1* (3.714)**	1 (3.601)	2 (3.905)	3 (4.102)	2 (3.542)
Creative Problem Solving	2 (3.676)	2 (3.557)	6 (3.766)	2 (4.141)	3 (3.497)
Planning-For-Planning	3 (3.643)	4 (3.454)	1 (4.053)	4 (4.097)	5 (3.374)
Personal Awareness	4 (3.622)	6 (3.285)	7 (3.755)	6 (3.996)	1 (3.634)
Staff Development	5 (3.614)	3 (3.486)	4 (3.874)	1 (4.143)	4 (3.393)
Long-Range Planning	6 (3.474)	5 (3.351)	5 (3.845)	5 (4.037)	7 (3.138)
School As An Ecosystem	7 (3.459)	7 (3.234)	3 (3.904)	7 (3.834)	6 (3.245)

* Ranking

** Need Index

Table 2

Spearman Rank-Order Correlations by Leadership Area for the Groups Surveyed

	Elementary Principals (n=59)	Secondary Principals (n=24)	Secondary Vice-Principals (n=45)	Central Office Personnel (n=61)	Composite (n=195)
Elementary Principals					
Secondary Principals	.26				
Secondary Vice-Principals	.85*	.07			
Central Office Personnel	.57	-.32	.25		
Composite Group	.82*	.20	.53	.67	

* Spearman rho significant at $p < .05$

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Introduction

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain pertinent information regarding your administrative role, knowledge, skill and desire for training. The information will be used to plan training sessions for administrative personnel. The questionnaire contains a list of selectively-designed questions pertaining to knowledge and skills that are required of educational administrators.

Directions

On the following pages, read the statements describing various administrative skills. Then indicate the extent of your interest or desire for training by circling a number in the left-hand column. The following definitions may be used to guide your responses:

1) No Training (Skill Unrelated) - - You do not desire training in the practice or procedure because you feel the skill is unrelated to your administrative task/assignment.

2) No Training (Competency High) - - You do not desire training in the practice or procedure because you feel your degree of competency is high.

3) Training: Awareness Level - - You are unfamiliar with the practice or process, and would prefer a short overview to acquaint yourself.

4) Training: Initial Practice - - You are vaguely familiar with the practice or process, or your knowledge is only cursory; you would prefer training to begin at the introductory level.

5) Training: Skill Refinement - - You are familiar with the practice or process, have had some training (or are currently undergoing training), and desire more training; you would prefer training to begin at an intermediate or advanced level.

6) Assistance with School Implementation - - You are familiar with the practice or process; you feel that you need actual assistance in implementing the skill in your school environment.

IMMEDIATE DESIRE

	No Training (Skill Unrelated)	No Training (Competency High)	Training: Awareness Level	Training: Initial Practice	Training: Skill Refinement	Assistance with School Implementation	Statement of Skill
(1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying personal factors that foster school leadership.
(2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Deciding specific actions (events) that need to occur in order to accomplish my school (district) goals.
(3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Planning for the involvement of parents, students and staff in setting school goals.
(4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying appropriate learning activities for inservice programs.
(5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Involving peers in the observation of instruction.
(6)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying my belifes in regard to staff/student learning, growth, school organization and instruction.
(7)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing the focus for personalized supervision programs.
(8)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Organizing the school organization around school goals.
(9)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Motivating a school staff toward improved performance.

IMMEDIATE DESIRE

	No Training (Skill Unrelated)	No Training (Competency High)	Training: Awareness Level	Training: Initial Practice	Training: Skill Refinement	Assistance with School Implementation	Statement of Skill
(10)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Integrating external school pressures, guidelines and policies with internal school (district) needs and goals.
(11)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying the subsystems of school (district) organization and their effects on school performance.
(12)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Analyzing a school (district) as an ecosystem.
(13)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing group creative problem-solving skills.
(14)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Leading a staff toward creative solutions to problems.
(15)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Categorizing multiple possibilities into workable strategies.
(16)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Determining arnual strategies for individual teacher improvement.
(17)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Linking school goals to supervision.
(18)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Determining when to intervene in the school improvement process.
(19)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Linking teacher performance standards and plans to school goals and to teacher evaluation.

IMMEDIATE DESIRE

	No Training (Skill Unrelated)	No Training (Competency High)	Training: Awareness Level	Training: Initial Practice	Training: Skill Refinement	Assistance with School Implementation	Statement of Skill
(20)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing a climate of growth for clinical supervision policies.
(21)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying the sources of and the categories for school (district) goals.
(22)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Budgeting time.
(23)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Keeping a school staff on an agreed-upon course of activities and practices.
(24)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing strategies for supervisory conference feedback.
(25)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Generating creative solutions to simple/complex school (district) problems.
(26)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Evaluating the effects of goal implementation.
(27)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying the concepts of clinical supervision.
(28)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Altering the influence of forces at work to accomplish my school (district) goals more effectively.
(29)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing the focus for inservice programs.

IMMEDIATE DESIRE

	No Training (Skill Unrelated)	No Training (Competency High)	Training: Awareness Level	Training: Initial Practice	Training: Skill Refinement	Assistance with School Implementation	Statement of Skill
(30)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing pre-observation conference planning techniques for supervision.
(31)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Monitoring and assessing the goal implementation process.
(32)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Linking teacher performance plans to school goals.
(33)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Critiquing ideas while keeping communications open.
(34)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying the focus for and prioritizing school goals.
(35)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Critiquing problem solutions until they are acceptable and workable.
(36)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Nurturing staff leadership.
(37)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying the relationship between school management and school goals.
(38)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Managing the boundaries between internal (school/community) and external (district/state) pressures for change.
(39)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Determining appropriate leadership behaviors for influencing individual staff members.

IMMEDIATE DESIRE

	No Training (Skill Unrelated)	No Training (Competency High)	Training: Awareness Level	Training: Initial Practice	Training: Skill Refinement	Assistance with School Implementation	Statement of Skill
(40)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying my personality characteristics and their influence on my leadership effectiveness.
(41)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Linking personal goals to inservice training.
(42)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying personal leadership style and its effect on my performance.
(43)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Converting my concerns for school-wide improvement into school goals.
(44)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Assessing the growth needs of my school organization.
(45)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Linking annual school goals to team and to teacher goals.
(46)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Establishing group communication skills to use in staff planning meetings.
(47)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Linking school goals to teacher evaluation.
(48)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing a time-line of events so that my goals will be accomplished.
(49)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Establishing a school environment which fosters creative thinking.
(50)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Linking teacher performance standards and plans to teacher evaluation.

IMMEDIATE DESIRE

	No Training (Skill Unrelated)	No Training (Competency High)	Training: Awareness Level	Training: Initial Practice	Training: Skill Refinement	Assistance with School Implementation	Statement of Skill
(51)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Increasing my vision of what is possible in my school (district).
(52)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Analyzing available resources for school activities.
(53)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying the various forces at work and their negative and positive influence on my school goals.
(54)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Ensuring that school goals reflect the concerns of the entire school community.
(55)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Determining the combined effect of my personality, self-concept, leadership and beliefs on my job performance.
(56)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying the critical management functions in a school organization.
(57)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Planning for cognitive, affective and skill learning development programs.
(58)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing a school-wide goal setting process.
(59)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Defining the function of team leaders in school-wide planning.
(60)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Prioritizing activities to accomplish school goals.
(61)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Linking inservice programs to supervision.

IMMEDIATE DESIRE

	No Training (Skill Unrelated)	No Training (Competency High)	Training: Awareness Level	Training: Initial Practice	Training: Skill Refinement	Assistance with School Implementation	Statement of Skill
(62)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing strategies for accomplishing school goals.
(63)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Individualizing inservice programs.
(64)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying individual and total staff growth needs.
(65)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing procedures for collecting and analyzing data from classroom observations.
(66)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Clarifying and analyzing problems succinctly.
(67)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Developing skill in identifying and utilizing various methodologies for classroom observation.
(68)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Sequencing learning activities in in-service programs to foster desired growth.
(69)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying gaps between my beliefs and current school practices.

IMMEDIATE DESIRE

	No Training (Skill Unrelated)	No Training (Competency High)	Training: Awareness Level	Training: Initial Practice	Training: Skill Refinement	Assistance with School Implementation	Statement of Skill
(70)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying effective instructional techniques for inservice programs.
(71)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Identifying my self-concept strengths and weaknesses and their effects on my goals.
(72)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Conducting monthly or quarterly evaluation of school improvement plans and accomplishments.
(73)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Assessing my own professional growth needs.
(74)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Controlling school activities so that goals are accomplished.
(75)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Setting short range project goals.
(76)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Evaluating teacher performance.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please mark the appropriate blank. Feel free to add comments when you feel that they are applicable.

JOB TITLE which best describes your position:

____principal ____assistant principal
____superintendent ____assistant superintendent
____supervisor or curriculum director
____education service center personnel ____university faculty

DIVISION(S) for which you are responsible:

___ elementary ___ middle or junior high school ___ high school

SIZE of school district (region):

____less than 500 scholastics
____500-2,000 scholastics
____more than 2,000 scholastics

SETTING of school district is mainly:

____urban ____suburban ____rural

MAJOR ECONOMIC support for the community comes from (one or more):

____agriculture ____oil ____military ____ranching
____no dominant industry or trade ____other: Specify_____

ETHNIC BREAKDOWN (rough percentage) of your school community:

____%Anglo ____%Black ____%Spanish-speaking __%Non-American
____%Indian ____%Other: Specify_____

PARTICIPANT'S NAME _____

_____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

_____

_____

ZIP CODE_____

DATE_____